CHAPTER 36

Mike Mansfield's Senate: The Great Society Years

September 8, 1986

Mr. President, United States senators, like baseball fans, love statistics. From time to time, we stop to congratulate colleagues on their years of service, the number of votes they have cast, their tenure in a committee chairmanship. We present a "golden" gavel award to senators who preside for a hundred hours in the chamber. Various interest groups collect our roll-call statistics, and rate how liberal or conservative we are or how often we support or oppose the president's program or how we voted on their favorite legislation. The American Enterprise Institute regularly publishes a volume, *Vital Statistics on Congress,* which accounts for everything from our religious affiliations to the number of staff we hire to the amount of mail we send out, measured in the millions of pieces. In this vast array of statistics, some record-holders stand out from the others. These senatorial Ty Cobbs and Babe Ruths have set standards of longevity and accomplishment that we know will take generations before they are surpassed, if ever.

On August 15, 1974, the Senate paid tribute to one of its champions, Montana's Mike Mansfield, on the 225th day of his thirteenth year as Senate Democratic Leader. On that occasion, he passed the record held by Arkansas' Joseph T. Robinson, who served as Democratic Leader from 1923 through 1937. Unlike Robinson, who had spent nine years as Minority Leader and four as Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield served only as Majority Leader. Indeed, when he retired in January 1977, he had spent the entire sixteen years of his leadership in the majority. In contrast, the Senate has had three Majority Leaders in the ten years since Senator Mansfield departed. If this were not a grand-enough statistic to make the *Guinness Book of Records,* our former colleague has gone on to set another record as the longest-serving American ambassador to Japan, a post he has held in both the Carter and Reagan administrations, and which he continues to hold.

Mr. President, these statistics are not oddities to be dealt with lightly. They are the measure of a remarkable man. They reflect his lifelong commitment to public service, his persistence and endurance, and an abiding bipartisan respect for his wisdom and ability. The purpose of these remarks, in my continuing series of addresses on the history

of the United States Senate, is to discuss Mike Mansfield's leadership. His service was so long, and covered an era so turbulent, that I plan to divide my discussion into two parts—one on the domestic policy issues and one on the foreign policy issues of the Mansfield Senate. While some may consider this period more as one of current events than of history, let me add one additional, startling statistic: sixty-three of the present one hundred members of the United States Senate came here after Mike Mansfield retired. It is to those sixty-three, in particular, that I direct my remarks today, as well as to those who will study the history of the United States Senate in the years and decades and centuries to come.

Mike Mansfield and Montana are so synonymous that it is hard to believe he was not born on some windswept prairie or in a bustling mining town, but, rather, in Greenwich Village, New York, on March 16, 1903. "I was born of immigrants in New York City," he once recalled, "among immigrants, drawn from everywhere in the world. They had one thing in common: it was a belief in the promise of America." When Mike was three years old, his mother died, and his father sent the child to Great Falls, Montana, to live with an aunt and uncle. "From the age of three, my home was a general store in Montana," Mansfield said. "The people who came and went were miners, farmers and cowpunchers. They were prospectors, railroaders and teachers. They came from the South and from the Middle West. They were free souls who drifted or were driven to seek a new life on the Western frontier."

Before finishing the eighth grade, Mike Mansfield dropped out of school to begin an odyssey that took him around the world and into the mines of Montana. Mike was fourteen when America entered World War I. Being patriotic, although underage, he ran away from home and enlisted in the United States Navy. For a man who likes to set records, it should perhaps not be too surprising that after service in the navy, from 1918 to 1919, Mike went on to enlist in the army, where he served from 1919 to 1920, and then in the Marine Corps, from 1920 to 1922. Mike Mansfield has been the only United States senator to serve in these three branches of the military—and if there had been a separate air force in those days, he probably would have joined it as well! "The Army gave me the rank of private," he said, "the Navy, seaman 2d class, and the Marine Corps, P.F.C. In the training camps in the United States, on the North Atlantic, in barracks in the Philippines and China—I served with enlisted men from everywhere in the nation." [1]

After seeing the world, Mike returned to Montana as a mucker (or a shoveler) in the copper fields of Butte. When he was twenty-four, he enrolled in the Montana School of Mines to become a mining engineer. There, he met and fell in love with Maureen Hayes. Maureen was a schoolteacher, and Mike was an eighth-grade dropout. She recognized his intelligence and wanted him to achieve his full potential. No matter how much he might have learned as the world traveler that he was, she refused to marry him until he got a formal education. So, Mike set out to win her hand by finishing high school and going to college. They married while he was a student at Montana State University. "It was my wife who really got me started, who pushed me, and thank the Lord she did," Mike said. He added that, while his heroes were Montana Senator Tom Walsh and Western artist Charlie Russell, his heroine was his wife.[2]

Mike got his bachelor of arts degree in 1933 and set out to teach high school, but two Montana towns refused to hire him because he was a Roman Catholic—how deep grew the roots of religious intolerance in those days! Maureen, however, cashed in her

Maureen Mansfield encouraged her husband's career in education and politics. The family is seen here while Mike Mansfield was a professor at Montana State University in 1939.

Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library/University of Montana

life insurance policy to help her husband go back to Montana State University. There, in 1934, he earned his master's degree and joined the faculty as a professor of Latin American and Far Eastern history and political science. But the classroom could not hold him. Politics—Democratic politics—was in his blood. The Democratic party, he said, was "woven into all the years of my life," in the military, in the mining towns, and on campus.[3] So, it followed that the young professor—intrigued by politics; motivated by a concern for Montana, the nation and the world; and encouraged by his wife—would run for office as a Democrat. He lost a bid for nomination to Congress in 1940, running third in a three-man race. But in 1942, using his Montana State University students as his political organization, Mike Mansfield won the Democratic nomination and the election for a seat in the United States House of Representatives from the western Montana district.

Interestingly enough, Mike replaced Representative Jeannette Rankin, whom the state of Montana recently memorialized with a statue in the U.S. Capitol Building. A Republican, Miss Rankin was a pacifist who had won notoriety by casting the sole vote in Congress against American entry into World War II. In this act, she was consistent for, during her first term in the House, she had opposed entry into World War I. Her vote against the Second World War—when Pearl Harbor had just been attacked—was so unpopular that Miss Rankin stood no chance of

reelection. Although she did not run in 1942, voters showed their disapproval of their Republican isolationist representative by choosing as her successor a Democratic internationalist with a military record in three branches of the armed forces. For all their differences, however, in later years, both Mike Mansfield and Jeannette Rankin found themselves in common opposition to the war in Vietnam—he as Senate Majority Leader, growing steadily disenchanted with the war; she as a peace activist, marching with protest groups in the streets.

The House Democratic leadership, under Speaker Sam Rayburn, was delighted to have the new western moderate Democrat, elected at a time when Republican and conservative margins were increasing. They rewarded him with an appropriate assignment on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, where he ranked in seniority just below another promising young Democrat elected in 1942, J. William Fulbright of Arkansas. That same class also included future senators J. Glenn Beall and Frank Barrett, future Secretary of State Christian Herter, and such later influential House members as Brooks Hays, Chet Holifield, Walter Judd, and Ray Madden. Other House members whom Mansfield first met in the Seventy-eighth Congress, and with whom he would still be working decades later in the Senate, included Democrats Lyndon Johnson, Clinton Anderson, Warren Magnuson, Henry Jackson, Jennings Randolph, John Sparkman, Albert Gore, Sr., Estes Kefauver, Mike Monroney, and Republicans Everett Dirksen, Hugh Scott, and Margaret Chase Smith.

As one of the few members of the House of Representatives with an extensive knowledge of Far Eastern affairs, Congressman Mansfield came to the attention of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Just after Mike finished his freshman term in the House, President Roosevelt sent him on a confidential

Young Mike Mansfield, motivated by concern for Montana, the nation, and the world, embarked on his political career in 1940.
Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library/University of Montana

mission to China to inspect conditions there. Mike had first visited China as a marine private first class in the 1920's. When he arrived on the Chinese mainland in 1944, he found conditions there in turmoil. On the one hand, the Chinese were waging war against Japan; on the other, they were engaged in a civil struggle between Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek and Communists under Mao Tse-tung. Although Mansfield endorsed Chiang as "the one man who can make Chinese unity and independence a reality," he reported widespread disunity and dissatisfaction with the Nationalists. Reflecting the opinions of China specialists at the time, he also described the Communists as "more agrarian reformers than revolutionaries." This assessment may have accurately reflected the situation in the winter of 1944,

but events changed much more rapidly than anyone anticipated. By 1949, Chiang's government had collapsed and the Chinese Communists had seized control. In the angry and bewildered debate over "Who Lost China?" Mansfield came under fire for his report, and his race for the Senate in 1952 led to a smear campaign which labeled him China Mike.

No political innocent, Mike did not absorb himself in foreign policy to the exclusion of his constituents. He went to the Far East armed with information on the location of every Montana serviceman in the region. John Kamps, later an Associated Press reporter on Capitol Hill, remembered returning one day to his camp in the jungles of Burma to find a note from Congressman Mansfield, who had ridden ten miles in a jeep to visit him. Montana may be a big state in geographic size—the fourth largest in the nation—but it has a small population, among whom word quickly spreads, and such diligent attention to constituents does not go unnoticed.[4]

Congressman Mansfield's support of the Roosevelt and Truman foreign policies, and his increasingly respected voice in the House of Representatives, led President Truman, in 1949, to offer him the post of assistant secretary of state for public affairs. Mansfield declined the offer. He preferred to remain in Congress and had his ambition set on the Senate. In 1952, Republican Senator Zales Ecton was standing for reelection after a not particularly distinguished freshman term. Ecton was the first Republican elected to the Senate from Montana since 1913, and Mansfield considered him vulnerable. But the race was hard and bitter. Eisenhower's presidential campaign provided broad coattails for Republican candidates. Senator Joseph McCarthy also went to Montana to campaign for Ecton. In his typically irresponsible fashion, McCarthy accused Mansfield of being a Communist "dupe." Despite these tactics, Mike Mansfield won the election and entered the Eighty-third Congress as United States senator from Montana. Others in the Class of 1952 included John F. Kennedy, Henry Jackson, Albert Gore, Sr., Stuart Symington, John Sherman Cooper, and Barry Goldwater.

The Senate Democratic leadership, under the command of the new Democratic Leader Lyndon Johnson, recognized Mansfield's talents and appointed the freshman senator to the Foreign Relations Committee. Throughout most of the 1950's, Mansfield devoted himself primarily to foreign policy issues about which I will have more to say at a later time. During this period, he established a reputation as a quiet, hardworking, thoughtful senator—a man of honor and integrity. After the 1956 election, when Democratic whip Earle Clements was defeated, Majority Leader Johnson selected Mansfield as his new whip. This was unlike the way the whips have been selected in recent years—by vote of the Democratic Conference. But at that time, Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson named the Democratic whip.

Reporters Rowland Evans and Robert Novak have written that Johnson really wanted Florida Senator George Smathers for the post of whip, but that Democratic liberals objected to Smathers. Conservatives would not accept Johnson's next choice, Hubert Humphrey. Mansfield, as a moderate, appealed to both sides.[5]

There were some who said Johnson picked a whip whom he knew would never challenge his leadership, and that could very well be true. Johnson and Mansfield employed very different styles of Senate leadership, and it would be hard to find two more different men. Johnson was loud; Mansfield quiet. Johnson was impatient; Mansfield had infinite patience. Johnson twisted arms; Mansfield took a low-key, conciliatory approach.

As Majority Leader, Mansfield delegated the details of floor work to Senator Robert C. Byrd, who served as majority whip for six years under him. *Office of Senator Robert C. Byrd*

Johnson wanted it known that he was totally in charge; Mansfield believed he was simply one among equals and treated all other senators as equals. Johnson, in fact, made little use of either Clements or Mansfield as whips, preferring to use party secretary Bobby Baker to count heads and control the flow of business on the floor. Former Assistant Secretary of the Senate Darrell St. Claire recalled that, during Johnson's absences, "again and again Mike Mansfield would try austerely to rise and be acting leader . . . and find he had no troops behind him because Bobby was circulating around the back of the Democratic side saying, 'Johnson wants this kept on the burner for a while.' " [6]

In 1960, Lyndon Johnson won election as vice president, and, in January 1961, the Democratic Conference selected Mike Mansfield to succeed him as Majority Leader with Hubert Humphrey as whip. To Bobby Baker's surprise, Mansfield asked him to stay on as Democratic secretary. Although they had had their differences and Mansfield had every right to feel resentful towards Baker, he recognized his talents for counting heads and for keeping track of every detail—assignments Mansfield was more than happy to delegate. And I can vouch for his penchant for delegating such details myself, having worked as secretary to the Democratic Conference under Mike Mansfield for four years and then as majority whip under him for six years.

"Working for Mike Mansfield, compared to working for Lyndon Johnson, was like lolling on the beach as opposed to picking cotton," Bobby Baker later recalled. "I truly liked Senator Mansfield. He was a decent, gentle, kind man, and keenly intelligent.

Sometimes, however, I missed the fiery performances and gusto provided by Lyndon Johnson." Mansfield, Baker complained, would frequently disappear into his office to meditate. Because the new Majority Leader seemed to lack aggressiveness in his political pursuits, Baker and Senator Robert Kerr, chairman of the Finance Committee, moved to fill what they saw as a political vacuum. "We wheeled and dealed while Senator Mansfield sat alone in a favorite hideaway office, puffing his pipe and reading book after book." [7]

There were many who wondered how the Senate could ever operate without Lyndon Johnson at its helm—including Lyndon Johnson himself. He had been a part of Washington long enough not to expect much influence in his new post as vice president, nor did he anticipate much of a role in the executive branch. Instead, Johnson hoped to keep his hand in the Senate's leadership as a lobbyist for the Kennedy administration's legislative program. He even asked to keep the old office which was his as Majority Leader, and which the press had dubbed the "Taj Mahal." Mansfield turned down the room request but agreed to make a motion that Johnson be permitted to continue presiding over the Democratic Conference after he became vice president. Upon hearing this motion, after a moment of stunned silence, the conference erupted into furor. Senators Joe Clark, Albert Gore, Sr., Clinton Anderson, Olin Johnston, and A. Willis Robertson—certainly representing a mixed bag of political ideology and influence—expressed outrage over this violation of the separation of powers. Johnson's sometimes heavy-handed tactics as Majority Leader apparently had built up much steam in the Senate, and Mansfield's motion finally blew off the lid. Although the conference allowed Johnson to preside on that occasion, the vocal opposition from old friends had wounded his pride, and he rarely returned to conference meetings.[8]

Mike Mansfield stepped into the Senate leadership at the start of the administration of his friend and former Senate colleague John F. Kennedy. From all accounts, Kennedy deeply admired Mansfield. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., wrote that Kennedy "particularly liked and valued Mike Mansfield, approved of Mansfield's announced principles of 'courtesy, self-restraint, and accommodation' and considered him underrated because he did his job with so little self-advertisement and fanfare." Theodore Sorenson recorded that Kennedy sometimes "was frustrated by what he felt were Mansfield's excessive pessimism, caution and delays. But in view of his consistent string of successes in the Senate, he was deeply appreciative of Mansfield's loyalty and labors, held him in close personal affection, and felt that no Senate leader those years could have done better in the long run." [9]

The Democrats had strong majorities in both houses of the Eighty-seventh Congress—65 to 35 in the Senate, 262 to 174 in the House of Representatives. But these numbers hid the strong and deeply rooted ideological coalitions between highly placed conservatives from both parties opposed to Kennedy's liberal programs. Elected with an ambitious agenda that included civil rights legislation, medical care for the elderly, improvements in housing and education, and a desire to get the country economically moving again, Kennedy found that he could not command automatic majorities in either house or even count on the support of committee chairmen from his own party. The administration suffered embarrassing defeats in its farm legislation and on Medicare. Civil rights seemed bottled up in committee and faced a probable filibuster on the Senate floor. In 1963, the respected political scientist James MacGregor Burns published a book,

The Deadlock of Democracy, in which he despaired that any dynamic new programs could emerge from the ideologically divided and conservatively entrenched Congress.[10]

Given these frustrations over the Kennedy program, there were many who thought a Majority Leader like Lyndon Johnson could muscle recalcitrant senators into line. But this was not Mansfield's style. John G. Stewart, who served as special assistant to the Democratic whip, Hubert Humphrey, published a revealing comparison of Johnson and Mansfield's methods of leadership. "Temperamentally unsuited to operate in the style of Lyndon Johnson, Mansfield based his leadership strategy on an appeal to the senatorial interests of institutional pride and personal participation, interests seemingly far removed from Johnson's harsh world of political reality," Stewart wrote. "As one observer remarked, 'Mansfield seemed to believe that belovedness would become the guiding force in the Senate.' " As Mansfield himself said at the end of his sixteen years as Majority Leader: "I don't collect any IOU's. I don't do any special favors. I try to treat all Senators alike, and I think that's the best way to operate in the long run, because that way you maintain their respect and confidence. And that's what the ball game is all about."[11]

There is no question that the Senate changed dramatically between 1953, when Mike Mansfield arrived, and 1977 when he left. And much of that change was attributable to his style of leadership. As political scientist Robert Peabody has written, "From the early 1950's to the mid-1970's, the Senate changed from a largely Southern-dominated, senior-controlled, committee centralized institution . . . to a relatively decentralized, a much more egalitarian institution characterized by democratized leadership and greatly expanded role for its junior members." In some ways, Lyndon Johnson started this ball rolling with his appointment of new senators to prestigious committees. But, where Johnson had dominated the Policy and Steering committees and sought to make or influence all committee appointments, Mansfield allowed these committees fairly free rein and permitted contested committee assignments to be decided by secret ballot. Under Mansfield, the Democratic Conference met more frequently than it had under Johnson and acted more as a forum for party discussion. Mansfield encouraged committee chairmen and other senators to manage their own bills on the floor and take public credit for their passage. During his leadership, the number of subcommittees expanded from approximately 125 to 180, and the number of staff from nearly five hundred to twelve hundred, giving freshmen senators more of a chance to be heard and to influence legislation.[12]

Not everyone appreciated Senator Mansfield's passive style. In a debate over President Kennedy's foreign aid bill in 1963, Senator Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut argued that the Senate should be working harder and for longer hours. "Mike Mansfield is a gentleman," said Senator Dodd. "But I worry about his leadership. . . . He must say 'No' at times. He must say 'Yes' at times." Such criticism disturbed Senator Mansfield, and one Friday in November 1963, he asked the Senate for unanimous consent that he be recognized the following Monday morning to address the Senate on the subject of leadership, in order to set his critics straight. But that Friday was November 22, the day President Kennedy was shot. The death of the president had a profound effect on Senator Mansfield, who had lost a friend as well as a leader. We still recall his moving eulogy to the president with its haunting refrain, "And so she took her ring from her finger and placed it in his hands."[13] In the aftermath of those tragic days, Senator Mansfield said he

had no heart to read his remarks about Senate leadership and, instead, inserted them in the *Congressional Record.* As a result, the statement did not get the attention it deserved. In many ways, it expresses the Mansfield credo of leadership.

"Mr. President, some days ago blunt words were said on the floor of the Senate," he began. "They dealt in critical fashion with the quality of the majority leadership and the minority opposition." Several senators had found the performance of the Senate wanting, and had raised a hue and cry that had been further magnified in the press. "There is reference, to be sure, to time-wasting, to laziness, to absenteeism, to standing still, and so forth. But who are the timewasters in the Senate, Mr. President? Who is lazy? Who is an absentee? Each Member can make his own judgment of his individual performance. I make no apologies for mine. Nor will I sit in judgment on any other Member."

The Senate was not more or less efficient, he maintained, because it worked from 9 to 5 or around the clock. "It will be of no avail to install a timeclock at the entrance to the Chamber for Senators to punch when they enter or leave the floor." And he was proud of the Senate's record of productivity under his leadership, despite the many important bills still waiting for consideration. "It is not the record of the majority leader or the minority leader," Mansfield said. "It is the Senate's record and as the Senator from Montana, I, for one, will not make light of these achievements in the first two years of the Kennedy administration. And the achievement is no less because the 87th Congress did not meet at all hours of the night, because it rarely titillated the galleries or because it failed to impress the visiting newsmen and columnists."

Turning to the criticism of his personal style of leadership, Mansfield said:

> Of late, Mr. President, the descriptions of the majority leader . . . have ranged from a benign Mr. Chips, to glamourless, to a tragic mistake. . . .
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> It is true, Mr. President, that I have taught school, although I cannot claim either the tenderness, the understanding, or the perception of Mr. Chips for his charges. I confess freely to a lack of glamour. As for being a tragic mistake, if that means, Mr. President, that I am neither a circus ringmaster, the master of ceremonies of a Senate night club, a tamer of Senate lions, or a wheeler and dealer, then I must accept, too, that title. . . .
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> But so long as I have this responsibility, it will be discharged to the best of my ability by me as I am. I would not, even if I could, presume to a toughmindedness which, with all due respect to those who use this cliche, I have always had difficulty in distinguishing from softheadedness or simplemindedness. I shall not don any Mandarin's robes or any skin other than that to which I am accustomed in order that I may look like a majority leader or sound like a majority leader—however a majority leader is supposed to look or sound. I am what I am and no title, political facelifter, or imagemaker can alter it. . . .

And, finally, within this body,

> I believe that every Member ought to be equal in fact, no less than in theory, that they have a primary responsibility to the people whom they represent to face the legislative issues of the Nation. And to the extent that the Senate may be adequate in this connection, the remedy lies not, in the seeking of shortcuts, not in the cracking of nonexistent whips, not in wheeling and dealing, but in an honest facing of the situation and a resolution of it by the Senate itself, by accommodation, by respect for one another, by mutual restraint and, as necessary, adjustments in the procedures of this body.[14]

Mr. President, whether one agreed or disagreed with Mike Mansfield's theories of leadership, there was no question of his straightforwardness in presenting and defending his position. Over the thirteen years after inserting these remarks in the *Congressional Record,* Senator Mansfield never deviated from them.

One of the cornerstones of Mansfield's leadership strategy was that of developing good relations with the Republican Minority

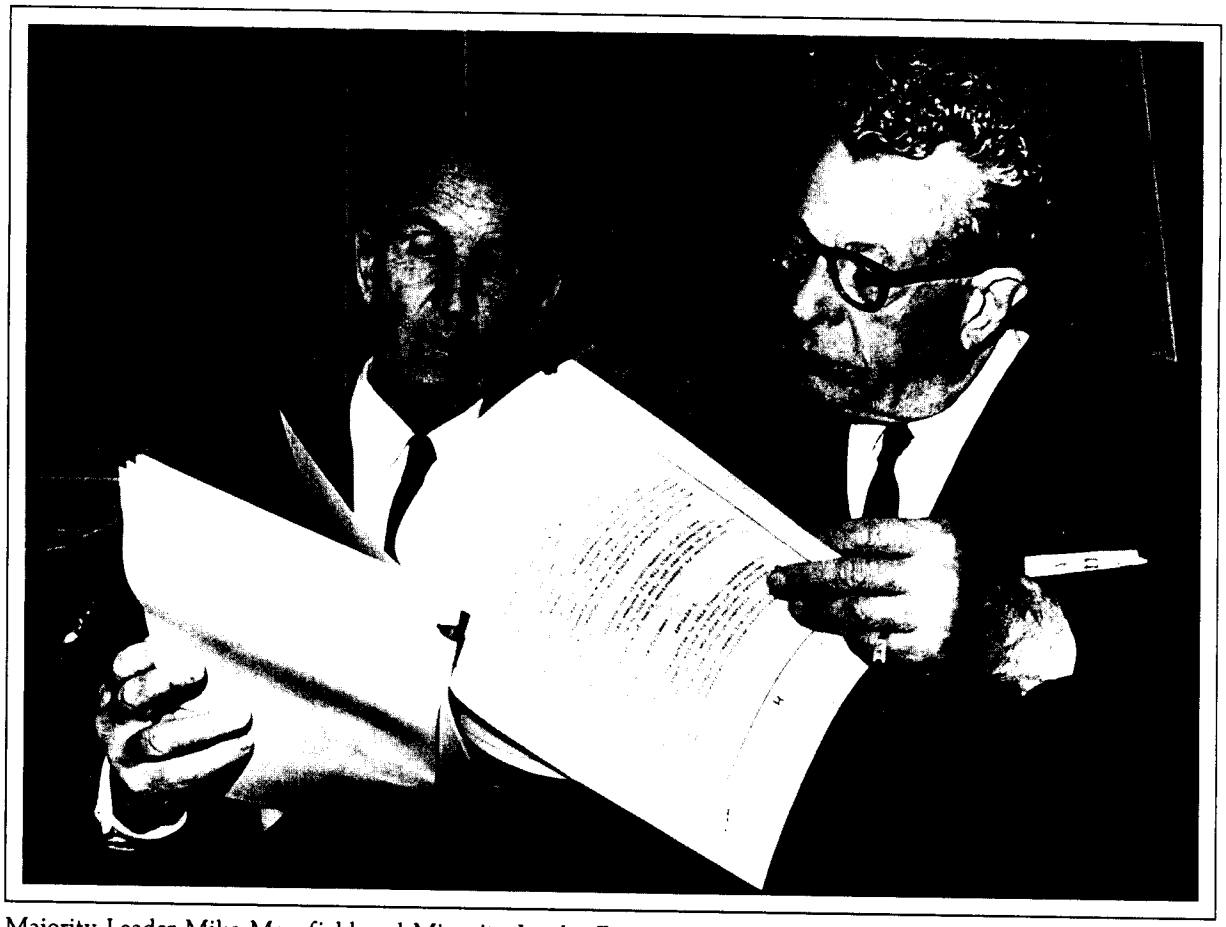
Leader, Everett McKinley Dirksen. Mansfield courted Dirksen, played straight and fair with him, and, as a result, won his cooperation at critical times in the legislative process. Without Dirksen's support, it is doubtful that the Senate would have approved the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1963, one of the most important treaties of the post-World War II era. Similarly, Dirksen played a pivotal role in passage of the civil rights bill of 1964. President Kennedy had proposed this legislation in June 1963, but it languished in committee. In his first address to Congress following Kennedy's death, President Johnson made the civil rights bill a top priority. As he faced election in his own right in 1964, Johnson knew that passage of the bill would be seen as a major test of his administration. But, for all the influence Johnson could exert over legislation, not he but Mike Mansfield was Senate Majority Leader.

In their book *The Longest Debate: A Legislative History of the 1964 Civil Rights Act,* former Representative Charles Whalen and his wife Barbara point out that Mansfield decided not to become involved in the day-to-day discussions and manuevering over the bill, as a way of preserving his negotiating status. But, they write, "in his own strong and deliberate way, he made two decisions that vitally affected the fate" of the civil rights bill: one was to appoint his whip, Hubert Humphrey, as floor manager; the second was to reject President Johnson's plan to try to wear out filibustering southern senators by enforcing Rule 19, which limited each senator to two speeches during one legislative day. Johnson wanted to keep the Senate in session day and night to wear down the opposition, but Mansfield decided that the best strategy was to go for cloture and he began lining up the necessary sixty-seven votes. (At that time two-thirds of the Senate was needed to invoke cloture.) This was the reason why Everett Dirksen was so vital to this strategy. Mansfield needed enough Republican votes to compensate for the Democrats who opposed the bill—and a few others who opposed cloture under any circumstances. I was one of those who had never voted for cloture up to that time and had opposed cloture under any circumstances.

Richard Russell, leading the opposition forces, also worked hard to entice Dirksen to his side, but, in the end, Mansfield's long courtship of the Republican Leader won him over. On June 10, 1964, the Senate voted 71 to 29, 4 votes more than the necessary two-thirds margin, to invoke cloture on the filibuster against the civil rights bill. Those 71 votes included 27 Republicans. A little over a week later, the same coalition passed the historic Civil Rights Act by a vote of 73 to 27.[15]

Mr. President, this capsuled summary does not do justice to the long, involved, and often passionate struggle over the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but the point I wish to make is that, while Dirksen had his face on the cover of *Time* magazine, Humphrey received kudos from the liberal community for floor managing the bill, and Johnson earned national praise for enactment of this landmark legislation, Mike Mansfield's quiet, behind-the-scenes strategies and efforts also deserved some of the credit for the victory.

The year 1964 belonged to Lyndon Johnson, and his sweeping victory in the presidential election against our colleague Barry Goldwater carried along with it vastly expanded Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress. The election gave Democrats the widest margin of control in Congress since the depths of the Great Depression, thirty years earlier. In the House, there were 295 Democrats to 140 Republicans—a gain of thirty-eight seats; and, in the Senate, there were 68 Democrats to 32 Republicans—a gain of two seats. Although the increase in Senate Democrats was not as nu-



Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and Minority Leader Everett Dirksen worked closely together to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
U.S. Senate Historical Office

merically significant as in the House, it was still a significant victory for it meant the reelection of the predominantly liberal freshmen of the Class of 1958, who would direct much of the legislative explosion of the Great Society years.

Lyndon Johnson gave the title Great Society to his program, which represented Democratic aspirations for a fairer, more equitable, and economically secure nation. Reform legislation which had been bottled up in committees, stymied by the conservative House Rules Committee, and seemingly immobile during the Eisenhower and Kennedy years suddenly burst forth onto the floor and was passed with breathtaking speed. Stewart McClure, chief clerk of the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee from which much of the Great Society's legislation originated, in his oral history described the change: "Lyndon . . . came in like a tiger, and everything that had been dormant and stuck in conference or committee went woosh, like a great reverse whirlpool spinning it out. We passed everything within the next year or two." Recalling these events years later, McClure was still amazed. "I had never seen so much activity in my life around here!" he said. "We were passing major bills every week. It was unbelievable.

Just a great dam broke. Everything but national health insurance, everything that had been piled up since Truman plus a lot of new stuff. . . . [I]t was fun!" [16]

A shining example was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. For years, education bills had bogged down over the issue of federal aid to education and the issue of separation of church and state. The Johnson administration proposed a new approach from an idea developed by the staff of the Senate Labor Committee. As Stewart McClure recalled, the committee had just been dealing with the issue of impacted aid—that is, federal aid to school districts to compensate for the children of military personnel stationed there, but who paid no local taxes. Charles Lee of the committee staff commented on what a good idea impacted aid was and then connected it to federal aid to education in general. As McClure explained it, "A child going to a poor school in a poor district should be considered suffering a national impact caused by the failure of the whole society to upgrade his disadvantaged area." To this, they added the entitlement idea behind the GI bill. "We thought that poor children living in disadvantaged areas should be entitled, as were veterans, to special attention and assistance to help them climb out of the hole in which they had been placed by the entire society."

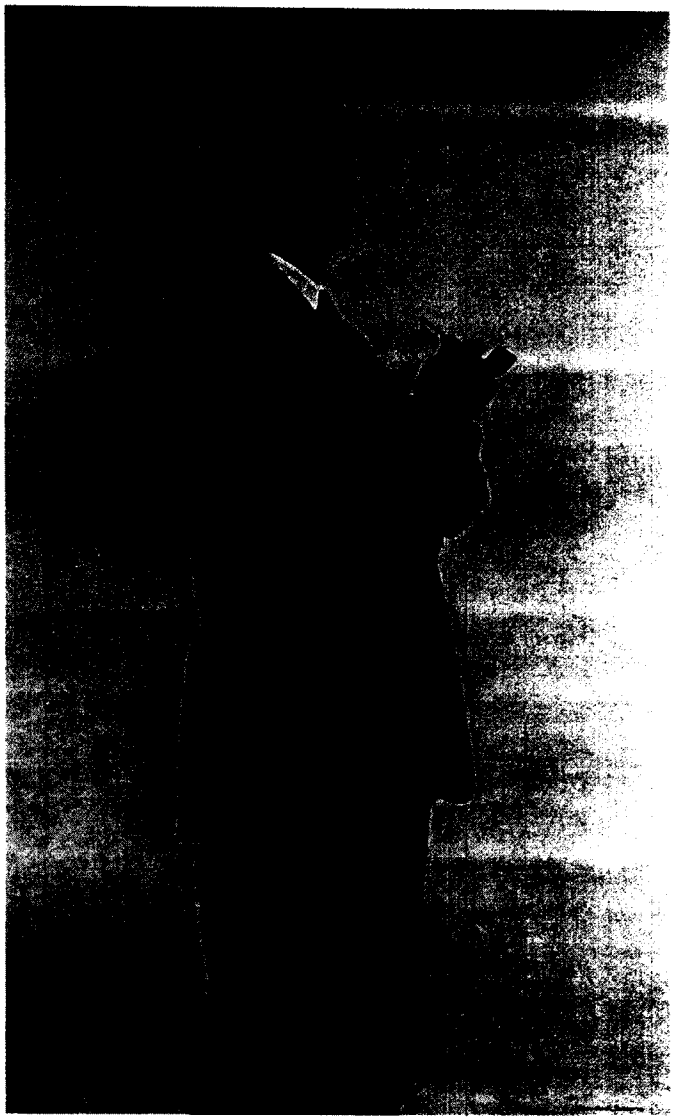
The staff took their plan to Senator Wayne Morse, chairman of the education subcommittee, who immediately recognized its value. Since the aid went to the children in poor areas, rather than to their schools, it avoided the whole church-state controversy. Senator Morse presented the concept to the Johnson administration, which embraced it warmly and then sold it to the education community. As McClure described it, "I think the ground was ready and the populace was prepared [for federal aid to education], but the Congress was not, until Lyndon, using the Kennedy martyrdom, so to speak, raised the torch and cracked the whip and made the phone calls." The education bill, stymied for so long, now moved so quickly, as the *Congressional Quarterly* observed, that "the word was passed to approve the bill and worry about perfecting details later." In January 1965, the president requested the bill; by March 26, the House had passed it. Two weeks later, the Senate committee reported it without amendment, and three days after that, the Senate voted 73 to 18 to make it law. Significantly, the Majority Leader played no appreciable public role in passing this landmark legislation. As McClure recalled: "In terms of the operation of the Senate you didn't even know he was around. . . . I don't recall Mansfield's intervening in anything at any time." But he added, "Nor did he have to, much." [17]

Mr. President, the Congress enacted so many major pieces of legislation during that period that I cannot tell the story of each individually. Let me just list in chronological order the domestic legislative achievements of the Johnson administration and the Mansfield Senate in the years from 1964 to 1966. Beginning in February of 1964, there was the Tax Reduction Act, which reduced both personal and corporate income taxes. In April, came the Economic Opportunity Act, which embodied President Johnson's call for a war on poverty. This act created the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Job Corps, and VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) to fight against illiteracy, unemployment, and inadequate public services for the poor. In July, the Civil Rights Act was passed. That same month also saw passage of the Urban Mass Transportation Act. In September, we enacted the Wilderness Act.[18]

April 1965 saw passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. In July, Medicare was enacted. In August, came the Voting Rights Act and the Omnibus Hous-

ing Act. In September, we created the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Also in September, the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities were established. In October, the Water Quality Act, the Air Quality Act, the Higher Education Act, and the Immigration Act all became law. The year 1966 saw passage of the Veterans' Educational Benefits Act in March. The National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act was passed in September. Also in September, Congress raised the minimum wage, extending coverage to restaurant, retail, and farm workers previously excluded from minimum wage requirements. In October, we created the Department of Transportation. In November, the Clean Water Restoration Act passed, as did the model cities bill.

By any standard, this was the greatest legislative record of any Congress with the exception of the Hundred Days of the New Deal. Lyndon Johnson, who had begun his political career during the Franklin Roosevelt years, had donned the mantle of his hero. In recent years, it has become fashionable for critics to dismiss much of the Great Society as "too much, too soon," to charge that the Great Society programs did not amount to all that Johnson had promised, and to imply that Johnson's programs have been undone. It is true that for a variety of reasons, Johnson never again achieved the legislative momentum he enjoyed in 1965. It is also true that he exaggerated and oversold many of his programs and perhaps raised hopes too high for quick solution of long and entrenched social problems. But, from this list of legislation which I have just enumerated—and there is more—I can only conclude that Johnson's Great Society legislation had a lasting impact on American society—from health to environment to equal opportunity. Also, in reading through this list, it is striking how much of the Great Society legislation remains, even today.



This portrait, by Aaron Shiklet, hangs in the Capitol's Mike Mansfield Room.

U.S. Senate Curator's Office

Despite the efforts of subsequent administrations to dismantle the Great Society, Medicare survives, as does the Department of Transportation and also the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the many programs they administer. The National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities still do their good work in promoting our cultural resources. The federal government still aids education, promotes traffic safety, and protects the environment. We

have continued and strengthened the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act. In addition, we have, during the current administration, enacted new tax cuts in the spirit of the tax reduction passed during the Johnson administration. Most of the work of the Johnson administration and of Congress in the 1960's was not in vain. Like Social Security and other reforms of the 1930's, its legacy has become entrenched in our way of life.

During all this legislative activity, Mike Mansfield presided, seemingly passive, puffing on his pipe, behaving no differently in the leadership than he had during the previous, frustrating years of inactivity. He still had his critics, but, by now, many had come to appreciate his purpose, his style, and his contributions. As Senator Edmund Muskie reminded us of the Majority Leader, "We must never forget that the legislative accomplishments of these years were also his accomplishments." [19]

For his own part, Senator Mansfield willingly conceded the spotlight and shared the credit for these accomplishments with his colleagues. When asked by the press about his proudest accomplishments, the bill that he delighted in citing was not one of the monumental Great Society laws, but the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1971, which gave eighteen-year-olds the right to vote. Senator Jennings Randolph had been advocating such an amendment since 1942, but the idea only began to gain popularity during the Vietnam War when so many teenage young men were inducted into the armed forces. If one was old enough to die for his country, the reasoning went, he was old enough to vote.

In 1970, Senator Edward Kennedy proposed reducing the voting age to eighteen as an amendment to the Voting Rights Act. Kennedy reasoned that the Supreme Court's decision in *Katzenbach* v. *Morgan* in 1966 would support taking this action by statute rather than by constitutional amendment. The idea appealed to Senator Warren Magnuson, who took it up with the Majority Leader. "You know, Mike, Teddy's got a pretty good idea there," Magnuson said. "I was a member of the state legislature in Washington in 1933, and I introduced a bill permitting eighteen-year-olds to vote. I couldn't get it to the floor for a vote. It still hasn't passed. . . . Suppose you introduce the amendment." Mansfield, in thinking it over, agreed. With his prestige behind it, the Mansfield-Magnuson-Kennedy Amendment cleared the Senate and House and was signed by President Nixon.[20]

The statute was immediately challenged in the courts, and the result was an unusual "double" 5 to 4 decision by the Supreme Court in *Oregon* v. *Mitchell* in December 1970. Justice Hugo Black cast the swing votes, upholding the eighteen-year-old vote 5 to 4 in federal elections, but holding it unconstitutional, 5 to 4, in state and local elections.

To resolve this difficulty, Senator Birch Bayh, who chaired the Constitutional Amendments Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee, led a successful effort to propose a constitutional amendment. The Twenty-sixth Amendment was ratified by the states in record time in 1971, and it reduced the voting age to eighteen for all elections. Senator Mansfield was delighted with the results and proud of his contribution. It was an appropriate stand for a man whose first political organization consisted of the students from his university classes.

After listing the eighteen-year-old vote as his proudest accomplishment, Mansfield cited three other items: his role in initiating the Watergate investigation; his part in initiating the Senate inquiry into the activities of American intelligence agencies (chaired by Senator Frank Church); and, finally, the "evolution, unpublicized, in the conduct of the Senate." He repeated to the reporter his,

President John F. Kennedy inscribed this photograph: "For Mike, who knows when to stay and when to go." *Left to right,* Representatives Carl Albert, Hale Boggs and John McCormack, Vice President Lyndon Johnson, Senators George Smathers, Hubert Humphrey, and Mike Mansfield. *Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library/University of Montana*

by now, familiar refrain, "All senators are equal in my opinion . . . there are no superstar senators, there are no second-rate senators, no senators who should spend months or years saying nothing, while their elders speak out on any and all subjects. There is no club in the Senate any more." [21]

As those of us who were his colleagues can readily attest, this was the way Mike Mansfield ran the Senate. No one ever accused him of twisting a single arm, of going back on his word, of using unfair tactics. He held the Senate up to its full responsibilities and expected it to behave properly by itself. This philosophy carried over even to the election of other party leaders. Senator Mansfield never intervened in the Democratic Conference elections, never endorsed one candidate over another. During his years as Majority Leader, the conference elected four whips: Hubert Humphrey in 1961; Russell Long in 1965; Edward Kennedy in 1969; and Robert C. Byrd in 1971. In none of those elections, even when incumbents were challenged, did Senator Mansfield take sides.

Mr. President, in future addresses, I will talk about other aspects of the Senate during the years in which Mike Mansfield served as Majority Leader—about the wrenching Vietnam War years, about the traumatic Watergate period. For now, however, let me conclude today's focus on Mike Mansfield's career in the Senate with a mention of his retirement. Among his favorite mementoes was a huge photograph from 1962 showing congressional leaders milling aimlessly around the White House rose garden, while Senator Mansfield can be seen walking resolutely away from the group. On the photograph, President Kennedy inscribed, "To Mike, who knows when to stay and when to go." [22] After ten years in the House and twenty-four in the Senate, he decided it was time to go. "It is not a long time," he said, "but it is time enough." The Mike Mansfield who left was remarkably unchanged from

the much younger man who had arrived years before. His administrative assistant, Peggy DeMichele, who had worked for him for many years, testified that he had "stayed the same." She commented that "there are so many little things he has done for the people in his state, things no one has ever heard about and he doesn't want anyone to know about. He has always tried to let others take the credit. Time after time he has worked hard for some project, and when the ribbon cutting time came he let others hold the scissors." [23]

On the last day that the Senate was in session during his term, his colleagues paid him special tribute. I introduced Senate Resolution 551, designating room S–207 in the Capitol as the Mike Mansfield Room. I knew Senator Mansfield, out of his typical modesty, would have objected when the resolution was introduced, so I waited until he was off the floor in the cloakroom. So, the room was named, and in it a large portrait of Mansfield, pipe in hand, watches down upon us today, as it will upon senators in the future.

Mr. President, during that last tribute to Senator Mansfield, in September 1976, I said these words:

> Each Member of the Senate, I believe, looks forward to the culmination of his years of service here with the hope that his actions and decisions have advanced the nation toward the realization of the ideals of our American heritage. Each of us wants to help the American dream to acquire a more evident reality. Mike Mansfield has not been disappointed in these aspirations during his years in the Senate. In an historian's terms, he will deserve more than a footnote in the annals of the Congress; he has already warranted a full chapter in any such account.[24]

Mr. President, I am a man of my word. With this address I have made Senator Mansfield a full chapter in my history of the United States Senate. He deserves no less.